

**Beyond Feathers and Leathers
American Indian and Alaska Native
Stereotypes**

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Diversity is Everything that makes us Different



Inclusion is a sense of belonging: feeling respected, valued for who you are; feeling a level of supportive energy and commitment from others so than you can do your best work.



An organization can be
diverse,
but not inclusive.



Diversity & Inclusion?



Diversity is the mix



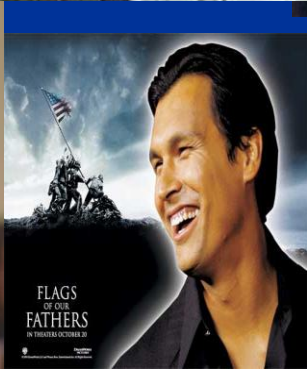
Inclusion is making
sure the mix works
well

The end result is an environment where diversity and inclusion is **respected, celebrated and leveraged for ourselves, and our AI/AN colleagues and customers.**

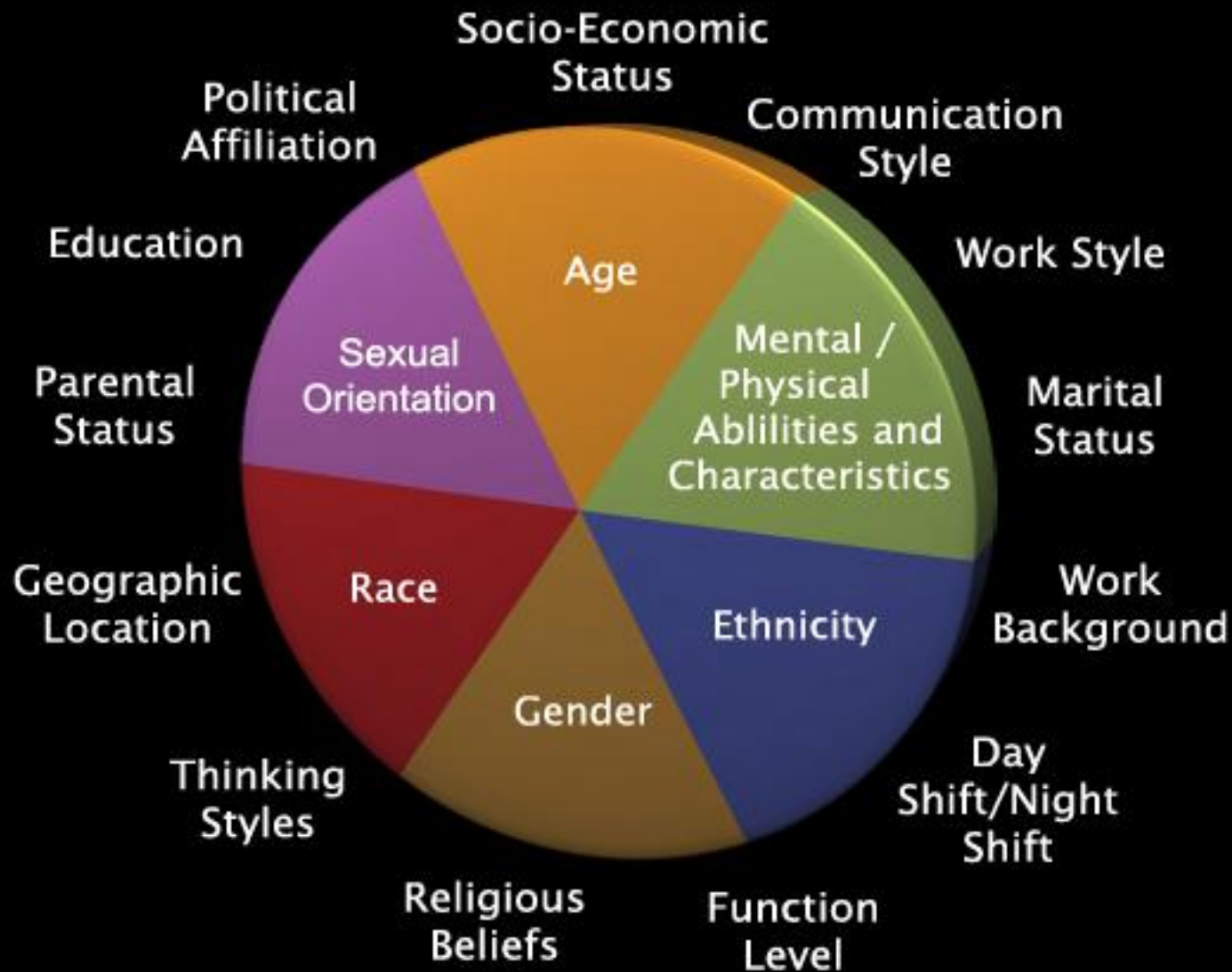
The myths...



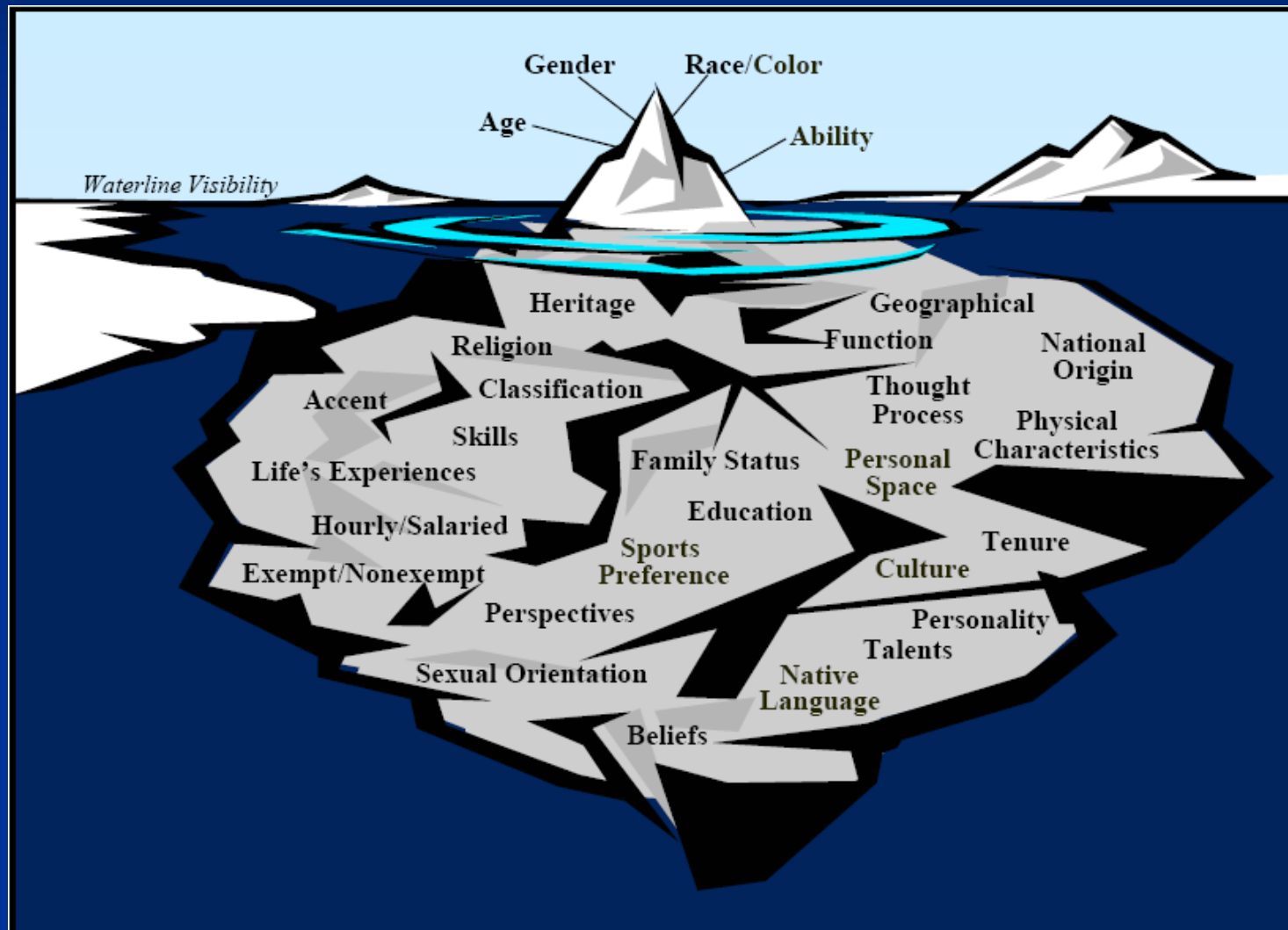
...and the reality



Dimensions of Diversity



Diversity Ice Berg

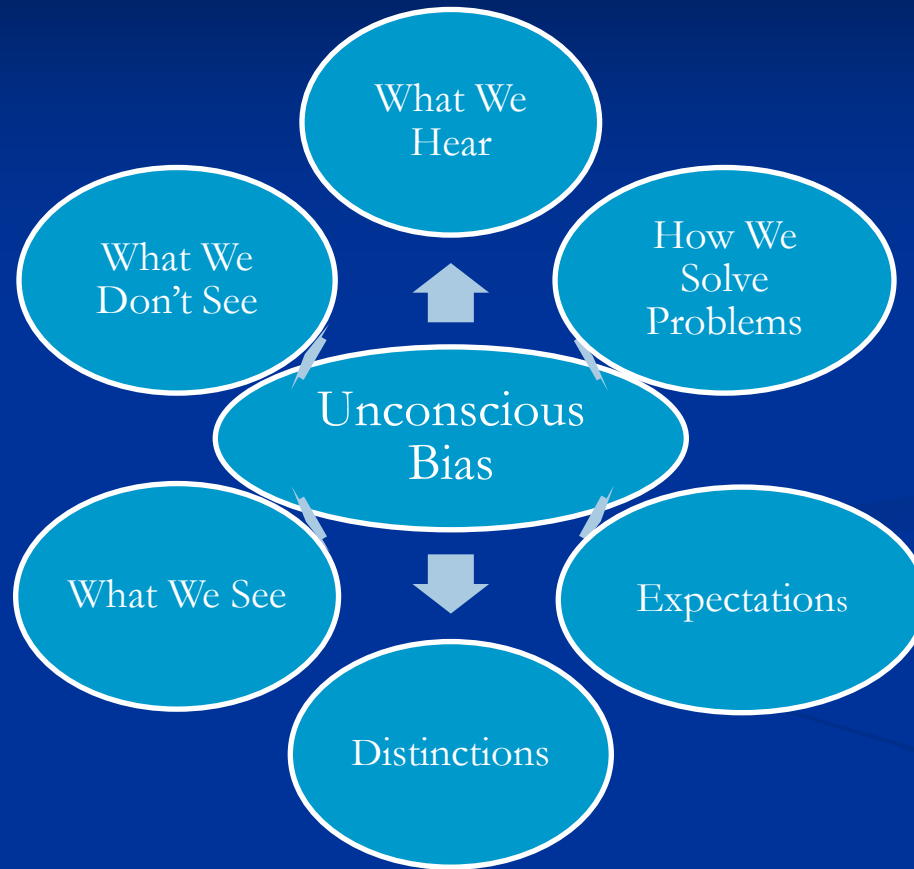


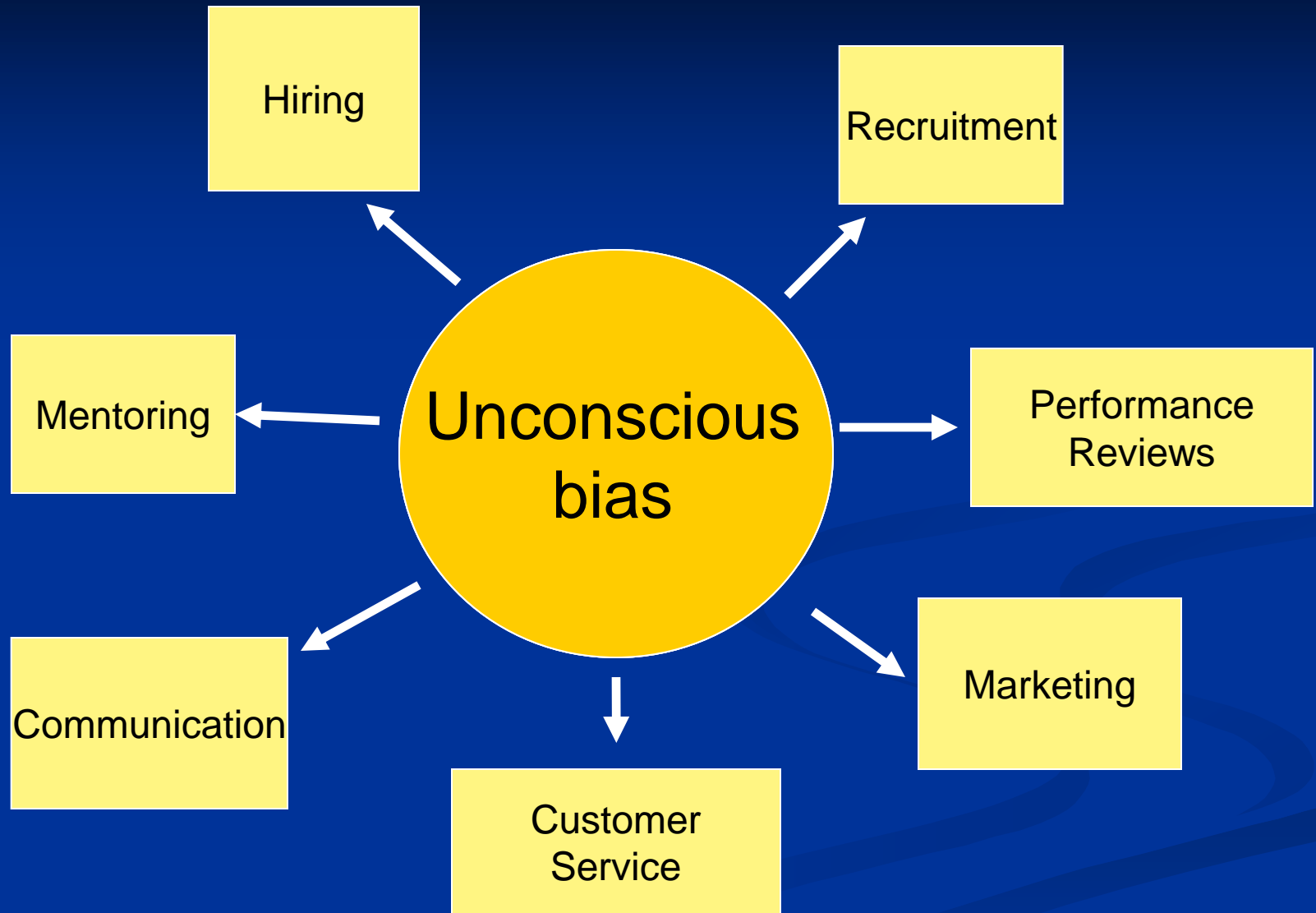


**Conscious
Beliefs/Biases**

The image features a large iceberg floating in a blue ocean under a clear sky. The visible tip of the iceberg is labeled 'Conscious Beliefs/Biases'. The much larger, submerged portion of the iceberg is labeled 'Unconscious Beliefs/Biases', illustrating that unconscious influences are far more significant than conscious ones.

**Unconscious
Beliefs/Biases**





What does diversity mean to you?

Political
Correctness

Code for Race/Gender

Quotas
NOT SO

Affirmative Action

Targets/Goals

POSITIVE

“Feel Good” policy

What does diversity mean to you?

Innovation

Creativity

Best talent from
everywhere

POSITIVE

Inclusion

Personal experiences

All differences

Diversity and Inclusion is an IRS Core Value

Core values support the IRS Mission to “Provide America’s taxpayers top-quality service by helping them understand and meet their tax responsibilities and enforce the law with integrity and fairness to all.”

Core values help to build emotional connections with **AI/AN employees** and **AI/AN external audiences**; and influence the perception and interactions with AI/AN stakeholders.

Diversity and Inclusion is one of IRS’ six core values and states that “We embrace diversity of background, experience, and perspective”.

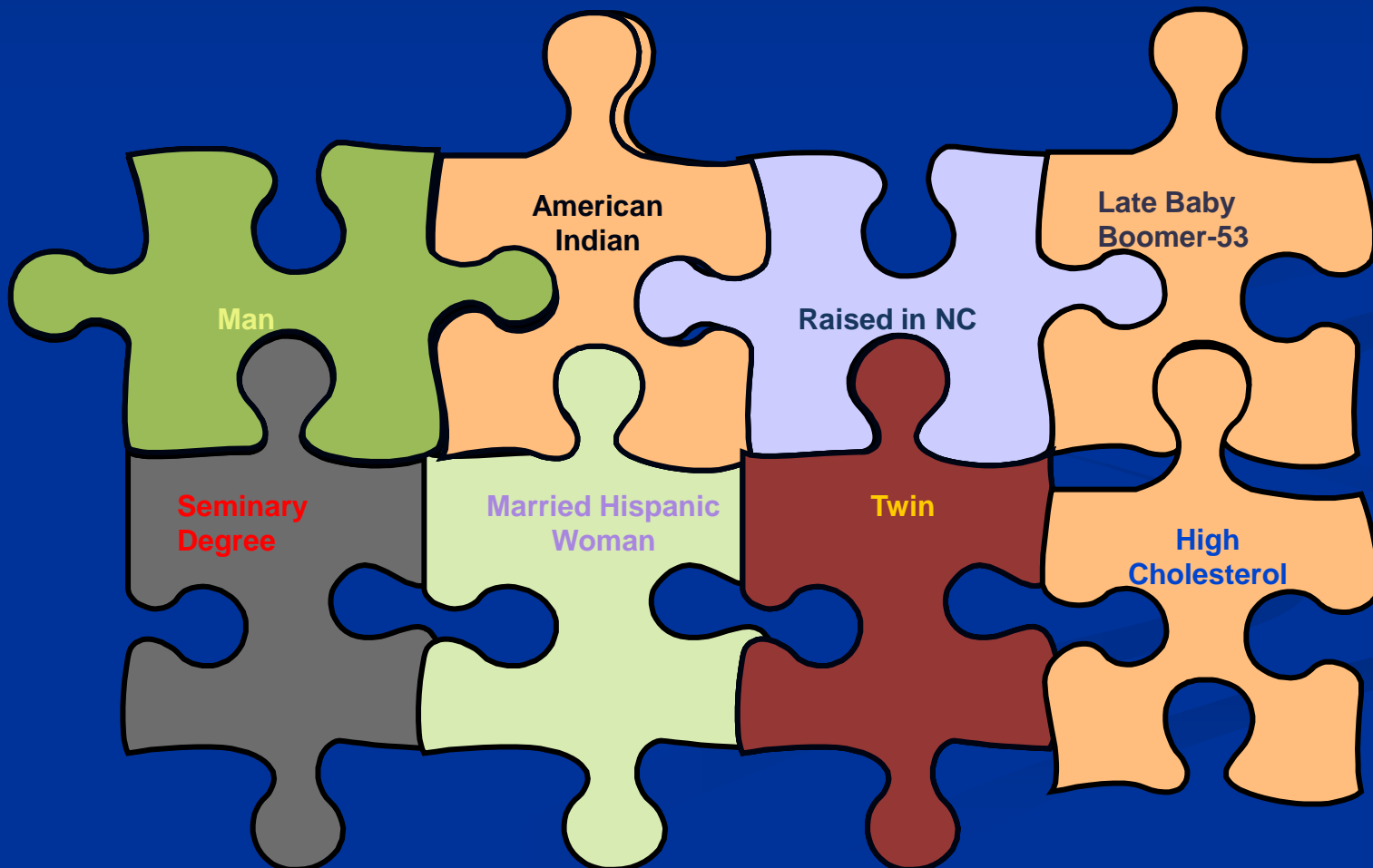
What Does Diversity and Inclusion Look Like for AI/ANs in the Workplace?

Someone who:

- Is aware of their own assumptions, values, biases, notions and limitations regarding AI/ANs.
- Recognizes the need to incorporate diversity and inclusion during their interaction with AI/AN coworkers, taxpayers, and practitioners.
- Can interact with AI/ANs.
- Is flexible and open to learning about AI/ANs.
- Is a good listener when it comes to AI/AN issues.
- Seeks self-improvement on AI/AN concerns.

Diversity is about everything that makes us different.

Diversity is **PERSONAL**



Do I fit the stereotype?

YES:

- I attend pow-wows maybe two a year.
- I received a college scholarship from the federal government.
- I was on food stamps.
- I do not celebrate Columbus Day or Thanksgiving.
- I oppose American Indian Mascots, particularly the R-skins.
- I believe in the Creator.

NO:

- I don't speak a Native language.
- I don't drink.
- I don't go to casinos.
- I don't have diabetes.
- I can't cook fry bread.
- I don't live on a reservation.
- I don't have a Indian name.

Stereotypes--overview

- Savages and warriors
- “Chiefs” and “princesses”
- The “vanishing breed”
- Lazy bums and drunks
- Rich casino owners
- Team names and mascots
- Offensive terms



Savage Indians

- “Merciless Indian Savages”
- Declaration of Independence
- “Nothing human except the shape”
- Thomas Jefferson
- “Wolves and beasts”
- George Washington
- “Essentially untamable”
- George Washington
- “The scum of the earth!”
- Mark Twain



Indians as Warriors

- “A skulking coward ... who strikes without warning”
- **Mark Twain**
- “Reckless, revengeful, fiendishly cruel, they rob and murder”
- **Teddy Roosevelt**
- “They carry tomahawks and knives, and their naked bodies gleam with paint and oil”
- **Peter Pan**
- “We are not as a race so much disposed to fight and kill one another as our Red Brethren”
- **Abraham Lincoln**



Uncivilized Indians

- “Wipe these untamed and untamable creatures from the face of the earth.”
- L. Frank (Wizard of Oz) Baum
- “Any band of school-boys ... are quite as capable of ruling their appetites.”
- Horace Greeley



Historical testimony

- "They are loving people, without covetousness....They love their neighbors as themselves, and their speech is the sweetest and gentlest in the world."
- **Christopher Columbus**
- "We found the people most gentle, loving and faithful, void of all guile and treason, and such as live after the manner of the golden age."
- **Sir Walter Raleigh**
- I am convinced that those societies (as the Indians) which live without government enjoy in their general mass an infinitely greater degree of happiness than those who live under European governments.
- **Thomas Jefferson**



The big chief

- Stereotype based on Plains Indian chief
- Stoic, arms crossed (wooden Indian)
- Popularized by Wild West shows
- Feathers and head-dresses considered sacred
- Worn only if earned



Historical chiefs

- 565 federally recognized tribes
- Thousands of cultures in North, South America
- Plains = one of 12 cultural regions
- Conclusion: “Chief” isn’t representative



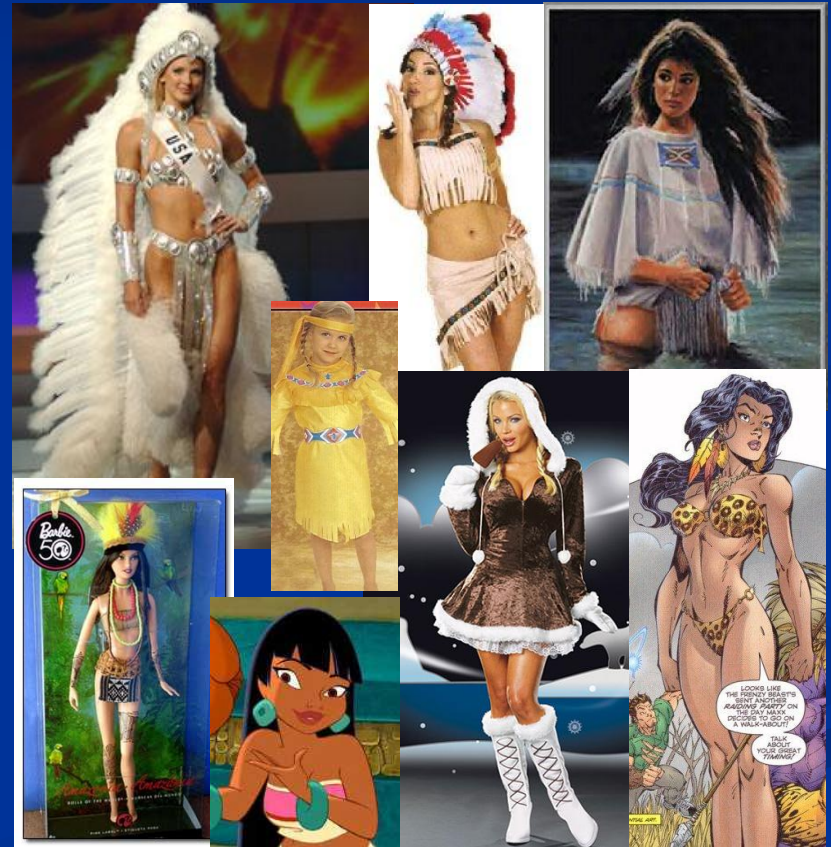
Modern “chiefs”

- Titled President, Chairman, Chairwoman or Chief
- Often have advanced degrees
- Generally wear business suits
- Headdresses for ceremonies



Indian princesses

- Usually the chief's daughter in fiction
- Marries a white man or dies tragically
- Wrong features, body type, and clothing
- Flaunting oneself not a Native value
- Most tribes didn't have royalty



The “vanishing breed”

- “Vanishing” Indians justified Manifest Destiny--i.e., genocide
- “Dances and feasts are simply subterfuge to cover degrading acts”
- W.S. Jones- Department of Interior Commissioner-1903
- “Kill the Indian to save the man”
- Colonel Richard Pratt, Founder of the Carlisle Indian School-1892
- “We simply chose an Indian as the emblem. We could have just as easily chosen any uncivilized animal.”
- Eighth-grade student writing about his school's mascot-1997



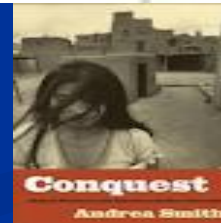
Drunken Indians

- “[A study] said that middle-aged American Indian and Alaska Native men reported lower levels of chronic drinking than non-Hispanic white men in the same age group”
- “If true, the findings dispel myths that American Indians drink more than the general population”



Indians as welfare recipients

- Myth: “Indians don’t pay taxes”
- Indians pay federal taxes and most state and local taxes
- Myth: “Indians get government handouts”
- Treaties traded land for services



Rich casino owners

- Myth: “All Indians are rich”
- Only 50% of tribes have casinos
- Only a few make big money

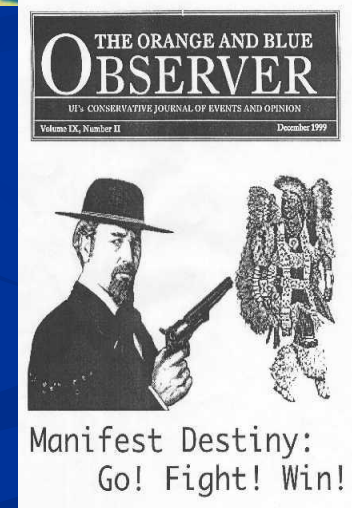
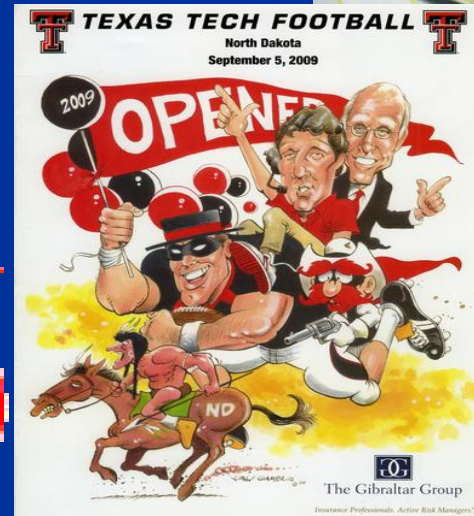


Team names and mascots



Team names and mascots

- Lions, tigers, bears, and Indians
- Indians don't feel "honored"
- Literature shows the "harmful effects of racial stereotyping"

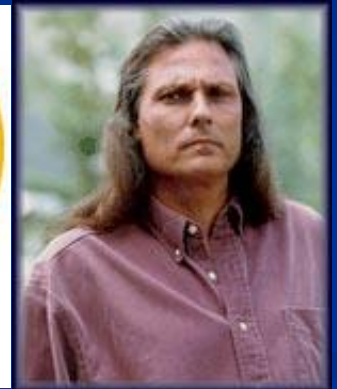


If you're still not convinced...



“Redskins”

- Origin of word uncertain
- “You dirty redskin!”
- Dictionaries: “Dated,” “offensive,” “taboo”
- Some think it’s equivalent to N-word
- Others think it’s equivalent to “honky,” “wetback,” “Jap,” “spic,” etc.



Historical Meaning

The word Redskin derived from the practice of skinning Indians for easy transport when collecting bounty.



Example of Historical Meaning

- "Chief Osceola" was killed under a flag of truce. His severed head was then kept in a medical museum for 30 years.
- To native people the logo of FSU is seen as a present day representation of that severed head.



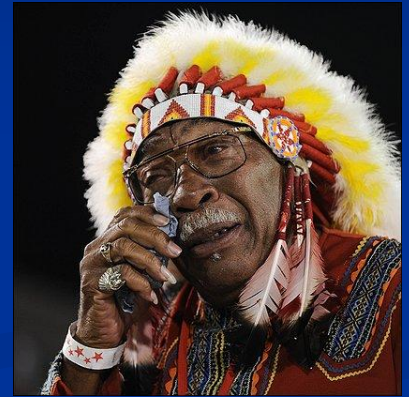
“Redskins” headlines

- “Redskins Back on the Warpath”
- “Ready for Battle ... The Rebellious Redskins”
- “Redskins Start Bloodletting Today”
- “Redskins Ambushed”
- “Redskins Sent to the Happy Hunting Ground”
- “Cowboys finish off the Redskins”
- 20th Century
- 19th Century
- 20th Century
- 20th Century
- 19th Century
- 21st Century



Washington Redskins

- Origin of team name uncertain
- Mascot is a black man dressed as a Plains chief
- Judges canceled the trademark in 1999--“may bring [Indians] into contempt or disrepute”
- Bottom line: “Redskins” is an ethnic slur



Problem with Mascots

1. The dominant group is using a subordinate group's ethnicity for their own entertainment.
2. Images negatively misrepresent an entire race of people in mainstream media.

Offensive terms

- “Indian giver”
- “On the warpath”
- “Circle the wagons”
- “Too many chiefs”
- “Like wild Indians”
- “Off the reservation”
- “Low man on the totem pole”
- “Let’s powwow”
- Funny Indian names
- How Indian are you
- Hold down the fort
- That is a nice costume



Tips on Choosing an Activity that could be offensive to AI/ANs

- What imagery is be chosen for the activity?
- Who is choosing the imagery?
- Does it confines AI/ANs within the past of present?
- Does it enhance the diversity of AI/ANs.
- Does it exaggerate the physical features of AI/ANs.

Tips on Choosing an Activity that could be offensive to AI/ANs

- How does the imagery correspond to images of AI/ANs in other media?
- How does it contrast with other ethnic groups?
- Would other ethnic groups want to be portrayed in the same fashion?

Tips on Dealing with AI/ANs

- Response to authority.
- Opinion must be correct.
- The Look, High Context, Collectivists.
- Time.
- Status by generosity.
- Competition < cooperation.
- Columbus Day.
- Thanksgiving.



Tips on Dealing with AI/ANs

- Summer and fall.
- November as AI/AN Heritage Month.
- No alcohol.
- Matrilineal vs. Patrilineal.
- Know it all.

It's a collaborative effort...that depends on YOU.

